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DIXIE DOLLS

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OTHER TALES

INDA BARTON HAYS





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In the evening we were carried home.

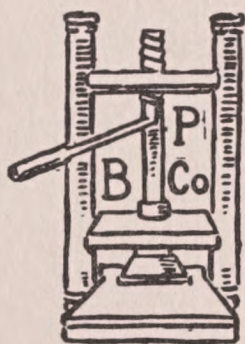
Dixie Dolls

and Other Tales

BY

Inda Barton Hays

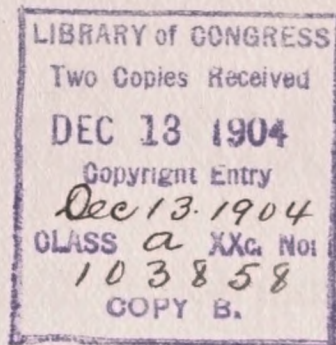
DRAWINGS BY HUGH M. EATON



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SECESSIA VIRGINIA.

A STORY OF LIBBY PRISON.

THOSE were strange times in Richmond when this incident, related after so many years by one of its juvenile heroines, occurred.

Coming at nearly the close of the war, it had been preceded, as little Betty Landon thought, by three years of pleasant, emotional changes without the monotony of childhood's usual pastimes. Even the sorrows she witnessed were not as griefs familiar to other children, and rendered her far older in ways and feelings than the decade of young people which went before or followed after.

The first queer happening that startled John Landon's little daughter came one

dark and drizzly night, in the early summer of 1862, when, by order of General Lee, the Landons were moved from their home place to a safer position "inside the lines."

"Burleigh," the home of the Landons, near the Chickahominy river, was an old-fashioned country mansion, built of brick. Six stuccoed columns guarded the front entrance, and five dormer windows blinked across its wide roof and looked down a long cedar lane to a big gate on the main road.

The Confederates, after several days' hard fighting, had been reinforced by Jackson—silent as a sphynx, brave as a lion, and who mystified not only the enemy but his own men by the celerity of his movements—and on the commanding site occupied by "Burleigh" it was decided to give battle.

"I suppose I must have thought 'the war' a normal state of existence," said Betty Landon, recalling these reminiscences to her small nieces, a score of years later, "for I do not clearly remember when it began.



Curiously watching the servants and soldiers loading
army wagons with our household furniture.

“My earliest vivid impression is of the night we left our dear old home. I recollect being suddenly awakened, and curiously watching the servants and soldiers loading army wagons with our household furniture. I, with the other children, was in a fever of excitement at the chaotic confusion, the appearance of gayly dressed officers, and of coming from the fairy dreams of a child’s trundle bed to the glaring lights and pantomimic movements of armed men anticipating battle.

“The sound of booming cannon, and the quick, sharp repetition of minie guns were already familiar to our childish ears, and the name of ‘Yankee’ was a bugbear that struck terror to the stoutest child-heart among us.

“But here was all the paraphernalia of war; with thousands of bronzed, grey-coated soldiers whose hot gun barrels from one day’s fight were scarce to be cooled for another day’s conflict; with lines of men

throwing up intrenchments, and torchlights shining weirdly on grim, determined faces, as if they dug one long grave for the dead which strewed the battlefields from Cold Harbor to Mechanicsville.

“It impresses me even now that there was but little noise. Aides hurried here and there; all the bustle and animation of field duty in the face of precipitate battle was there, but it remains on my memory as the changing figures of a kaleidoscope.

“There were lights on the hill where we had played the day before, and nearer campfires showing the tented yard, and around the fence a background of stacked and shining guns. Perhaps because it touched a child’s sense of the ridiculous, one incident of that night I have never forgotten. I remember going with my brother to the low, log house, when Uncle Bob went for the geese, and seeing that functionary tie their red-webbed feet together, and balance them behind him on an old black mule as he

trotted away. And I have often wondered," Aunt Betty laughed in telling it, "why those fowls were not beheaded; for if Rome was once saved by the cackling of geese, that wing of the Confederate army was surely endangered by the same tumult.

"We were tumbled at last, though, in the old family coach and followed Uncle Bob down the long cedar lane. Beyond the gate my mother got out; and Mammy, who carefully held the baby, had to hold me back also, for I vigorously kicked and cried to follow her.

"‘You’ Mar come back, chile,’ said Mammy, trying to quiet me; ‘she fergit suthin’.

"My mother *did* come back and wept as if with a breaking heart; while I sobbed in sympathy and Mammy offered ineffectual comfort. If it was hope mother went to look for, it was a futile search, for I learned afterward that she had gone to the trenches to bid my father ‘good bye’ once more,—my father who had been in all the Peninsular

campaign, until the chances of war with cruel irony brought him to his own farm to be left for danger, perhaps death, while his family fled for safety—he knew not where!

“But we found refuge and remained there until we could get through to Richmond, where we were soon domiciled in half of my uncle’s house on Churchhill.

“No more favored spot could have been found in the city to familiarize a child with the surroundings of ‘war times.’ In fact, we seemed to be in the centre of a military position.

“Below was the river; far down its sinuous windings we saw the coming and going of boats and the landing of troops. We knew all about the dreadful ‘Pawnee Sunday.’ We heard the continuous blasting of rock at ‘Dutch Gap’ and minded it no more than did the obdurate canal.

“Overlooking the river was Chimboraza, the largest hospital in the Confederacy, and thither my cousin Bella and I often went

with mother, to carry buttermilk or such poor stores as from our scanty supplies we spared for the sick and wounded.

“On Libby’s Hill were the tents—the parade grounds—the music. Below the Bluff, and farther down town, were the prisons—Mayo’s Factory, Castle Thunder and the Libby.

“There all our curiosity centered. We saw their red roofs from our attic windows and many a Jack-the-Giant-Killer speculation had we as to their inmates.

“There was a steep hill back of uncle’s house leading to a street level with the prisons, two squares off. In the clayey sides of this hill, hidden by a rank growth of paradise trees, brother Tom cut steps for his own convenience which our keen eyes soon discovered and the lithe and active limbs of childhood made nothing of scaling.

“My cousin Bella and I were inseparable. She was the acknowledged leader in all our sports and one year older than I; but I was

a worthy lieutenant, bolder in design—braver in execution. Bella was warm-hearted and impulsive, but would have fled from actual danger; I would have scaled walls in defense of those I loved, and counted danger as only an incentive. But we were fearless, adventurous children; an outgrowth of the exciting days in which we lived.

“Many a time had we slipped down to Main Street via the clay steps in the break-neck bank; thence to Cary Street, and peered, with bated breath, into the iron-barred windows of Libby Prison. A scowl from within or a rough look from the guard was a zest. In an atmosphere of danger its constant association benumbed our fears. Guns and guards were familiar friends—no fear had we of them.

“One bright evening in September, Bella and I, returning home late from school, met Sergeant Barnes of the Prison force coming down the broad inclined pavement on

the further side of the noted Van Lew mansion. This pavement, known as the 'brick steps,' was the regular descent to the streets below, and old 'Barney,' as we called him—for we knew him well—with his long, frayed, grey army overcoat dangling about his knees, was hurrying on to 'The Libby' to relieve guard.

" 'The Libby' was a square away; a long, narrow, brick building, four stories high and running the length from Cary to Dock streets. It was nothing out of the common fashion of ordinary tobacco warehouses, which, indeed, it had been, with its lower story windows perpendicularly barred with iron, quite near the ground.

" 'Barney,' said Bella, catching him by the arm, 'please let us go with you and see the big prison?'

" 'Oh, yes,' I urged, 'do let us, Barney. Just this once—so we can look in the window a long, long time.'

"Barney was very fond of children, and

we were special pets, so, after a bit more persuasion, he said 'yes,' and let us scamper along by his side.

"Barney was as good as his word; he relieved guard, and we paraded each side of him back and forth for a while.

"'Now, children,' said he presently, 'you can look in that window, if you wish to, and then run home. It's getting late.'

"We drew near the corner, as Barney turned, and fearlessly looked in.

"Right at the window, seemingly just to have risen from a cot close by, was a prisoner, a young man about twenty years old. Wasted with sickness, gaunt and hollowed-eyed was he; indeed, he seemed to us all eyes, so much did the blackness of their depths fill in the narrow face.

"So near were we and so startled the pale prisoner looked at our sudden appearance, that Bella and I clutched each other's hands in fright. The autumn evenings carry a summer's heat with them late, in Richmond,



"The next moment I had impulsively thrown inside a little bunch of red and yellow chrysanthemums."

and the dingy glass was raised behind the bars. One quick glance at Barney's back, and the next moment I had impulsively thrown inside a little bunch of red and yellow chrysanthemums, given me by a school-mate. Then Bella and I flew like birds past the corner and struck a bee-line for our near and precipitous route home.

"Here began our little romance. Certainly no younger heroines had ever taken part in one more hazardous.

"The rules of the prison, as we knew, were rigid—though we may not have known for what cause. But we did know that these were dangerous 'Yankees,' who were to be kept closely confined from possible mischief; that no one outside was allowed to speak to a prisoner, and that to give anything was to risk imprisonment, or at least some dire misfortune.

"The next evening we loitered on our way from school, and halted where the streets crossed. One way straight home—one

square aside and past the dark prison where the poor, sick man was locked behind bars—which should it be?

“‘We will just walk by and see if he is there,’ said I, ‘and see if he looks as hungry this evening.’

“‘And run away just as fast as ever we can,’ cautioned Bella.

“Demure little figures we must have been in our cotton dresses and home-braided hats, as we walked beneath the prison walls.

“One swift glance told us he was there—the pale boy prisoner—who left his cot and came near the window as we approached. Then two pairs of childish eyes of blue and brown peered into the dim obscurity and a little hand pushed in a spray of golden-rod that flashed on the dark stone sill like a ray of hope from the world without. There was no doubt now. He saw it and he saw us, for there came over the young face a quick and grateful look.

“After the lapse of all these years I still

see—as I beheld it in that one fleeting vision—the cheerless interior of the prison hospital, with the thin forms extended, or half crouched on their narrow cots. This one prisoner, with clear-cut, boyish features upon which sickness—death—seemed stamped, steadying himself by the window and gazing out with a listless, hopeless look in his dark eyes.

“What is it in the heart of a little girl that so intensifies the sense of pity for anything helpless? Surely it is the instinctive mother feeling.

“From that time and from that one look we felt for this friendless man the tender, protecting pity that one gives to a child. Conditions had reversed our ages. In all our little talks after this, he was simply ‘our poor prisoner.’ Ours by a sense of ownership in his sorrows. We learned to know the expression in his sunken eyes. We commiserated his hollow cough—a paroxysm of which racked his slender frame one eve-

ning—and noted his wan, sick look as part of his claim upon us.

“Again and again, as often as we dared, we ventured to the prison; sometimes by coaxing Barney, as often without.

“Our small size gained us an indulgent smile from the surgeons in the laboratory at the end of the building, if they saw us; and one young assistant doctor we soon learned to look upon quite as an accomplice. Perhaps these were not such close martinets as the regular officers; perhaps they thought it safe to be lenient to the sick.

“As the days went by I could not tell all we carried him; apples, cakes, a light bun—bought, if we happened to have a twenty-five-cent paper script—and frequently a roll, or biscuit, with a shred of ham from our school-basket were quickly and surreptitiously slipped in to him.

“We were little mites—slender children even for our ages—quick as sparrows in our motions, and often came and went while the

guard, with his keen glance at the upper windows where the well prisoners were, slowly paced his weary beat.

“Of ‘our prisoner’s’ mental sufferings, of course we knew nothing; the one thing that appealed to us being what we called his ‘hungry look.’

“Nothing intimidated us or baulked our ingenuity, and after a few weeks we were traitors, indeed, for we scooped out a bit of apple and in the cavity rolled a childish note, to which we signed our names with a fancy flourish.

“This mysterious epistle ran something in the fashion of:

“‘MR. PRISONER: We will give you sum Candy for your Cole termorrow.

“‘BETTY LANDON,

“‘BELLA ELLETT.’

“Thanks to our war-time training, we had been early initiated into this sub-rosa way of sending notes, for at this time Rich-

mond was one large clothing factory. At the churches, that were not hospitals, and at available dwelling houses, bands of patriotic women organized themselves in 'Aid Societies' for the manufacture of uniforms, and the preparing of bandages, lint, etc., etc., for army uses. To these meetings we accompanied mother or Aunt Betsy—the Dorcas of all good works. We had seen more than one lovely girl finish up the prosaic pockets of a pair of grey trousers and fold them in with some such sentimental verse as :

*“ ‘Then think, ah, think how lonely
This throbbing heart will be—
Which, while it beats, beats only,
Beloved one, for thee.’*

This, to say the least, being a very hopeless sort of affection, as the trousers may have been destined for the Quartermaster's Department in the cotton fields of Georgia, or fallen to some father of a family in the sugar canes of Louisiana.

“And sorrowfully had we known, through this same mail route, some dear mother-in-Israel to send off with prayerful hope:

“‘The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.’ Or—‘In famine He shall redeem thee from death’—the full force of this last being surely needed to strengthen the half-famished soldiers of the Confederacy. So this particular form of communication appealed to us by the light of a good example.

“One evening ‘our prisoner’s’ eyes rested lightly on the sill outside, and there we saw a bone basket; small, perfect, white as ivory, and closely pressed inside a tiny slip of paper—an end of our own note—with the words: ‘God bless my only friends,’ finely scratched with a pin point.

“On those rare evenings when he was not at the window and we met the horrid death wagons—which the smallest tot in Richmond knew—we shuddered with the fear that it was he who had died and was being

taken alone to his last resting place among the thousands at 'Oakwood.'

"But there presently came a change. Our prisoner grew better, that is, he looked better, for no words had been spoken. For all each knew of the other's language, our dialects may have differed as widely as our ideas of loyalty. He was better clothed; an erect carriage came to the slender figure, and a kind of *sans souci* expression about the handsome face, as if he and adverse fate had declared a truce.

"Latterly a glad smile from the dark eyes greeted us, and one day he nearly laughed out as Bella passed with a huge sweet potato temptingly displayed, and which, after some entreaty—and doubtless much slicing for concealed weapons—our young surgeon delivered. I remember that particularly, as Uncle Bob and the black mule were just in from 'Burleigh' with the 'crap o' taters.'

"How we could have lived in those days

of semi-starvation without supplies from the home place I do not know, and these fell far short of our needs, for all able-bodied servants were pressed to work upon the labyrinth of breastworks that girded Richmond, and few were left to till the fields.

“Darker days were at hand. Bella was taken sick. She was a beautiful child, who, through all the scant fare of our twin households, had, until now, retained her round face and rosy cheeks.

“I was thin and wiry, and suffered less in privation. ‘Tough,’ Mammy called it, who was wont to declare that ‘ole Mis’ nuvver die while dat chile lib,’ albeit ‘ole Mis’ ’—meaning my maternal grandmother—was dead years before I was born.

“Bella did not improve, and gave but little prospect of being out soon, so we held a council of war and decided that I should wait for Barney’s evening on duty and go with him to the prison. I started, but not meeting Barney, resolutely concluded to

venture alone. No thought of shirking what, by this time, had grown from the heat of a child's generous impulse to an affectionate sense of duty, crossed my small mind. I walked on, faster than usual.

"Yes, he was there, looking anxiously out at the bars—and the sash was down! But he gave me a quick smile, raised his white fingers to his lips, and slightly shook his head as the beardless M.D. came in sight.

"This was an evening of fatalities. I lingered too long near the window, and had taken but a few steps away when the guard—a stranger—grasped my arm. Not much of 'ole Mis' ' valor, that I had heard so often vaunted among the servants, came to her little namesake then, for I nearly shrieked with terror.

" 'What are you doing here?' demanded the sentinel.

"But I choked back my fears and was a Yankee for once.

“ ‘Where is Mr. Barnes?’ I asked. ‘Ain’t this his evening on?’

“ ‘Yes,’ said he, ‘but I ain’t Mr. Barnes and this is no place for you,’ giving me a grim look as he released my arm.

“And—I put up the street, and climbed the hillside steps like an Alpine goat! Once there we were always safe. But either the fright, or long insufficient nourishment, told upon me also, for next day I was ill.

.

“When we recovered, Bella and I, we were pale little shadows of what we had been.

“We learned from Barney’s wife, who lived near us, that he had been sent to field duty, and it was long after Christmas before we went to the frowning old ‘Libby’ again. Then, in fear and trembling we walked sedately past.

“The windows were closed and barred. No prisoners were on the ground floor where the hospital had been, and from the

windows above we saw no one like the boy captive we had pitied so much; no handsome dark eyes grew glad at sight of the little rebel girls.

“Time and again, as we grew stronger, we passed the prison and furtively stole a look up at the shadowy forms, while even then we felt a touch of ‘woman’s weary waiting,’ and fearful thoughts of the death wagon grieved our little hearts at night.

“We saw ‘our poor prisoner’ no more.

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“Meanwhile, the coil was tightening around Richmond.

“Gradually the compass of hope grew smaller and oftener the alarm bells rang, calling out the reserves—the old men and the boys to the city’s defenses.

“Amid want and privations only known to a besieged city, coupled with the riotous murmurings of a portion of its populace, the few weeks elapsed until the eventful day which closed the unequal struggle. Of

that memorable time, when Richmond fell, so much has been written there is nothing new to chronicle.

“We were not on the fire-belt, but from Churchhill overlooked a valley of seething flames. The explosion of the powder magazine, the bursting shells at the armory, the deafening bombs exploding in every direction, tolled off the hours; for time seemed to have gone into a fearful eternity.

“We children were kept in the house and how the next few days passed, I know not. All communication with the home place was cut off, and our allowance of food was divided out in famine rations. Added to which, mother’s grief for my father’s uncertain fate quenched even her brave spirit.

“And so the days went by.

“One morning, we were all in mother’s room—for fear kept us together—when Mammy came in and handed mother a card.

“ ‘What does he want, Judy?’ said mother,

turning it about. 'What can he want with me?'

"'De name er heaben on'y kno', Mis' Ma'y,' replied Mammy, 'hit's a Yankee ossifer, an' he say he wants you erlone.'

"Mother gave one look at her frightened little flock; said something in a low tone to Mammy and went slowly out.

"Mam' Judy gave us our scant dinner of dried peas, corn bread and black molasses, and Bella and I crept upstairs and ensconced ourselves in our favorite dormer window.

"After a long while we heard mother call; and then Mammy came panting up the steps—for hard times had not told upon her stout frame.

"'You' ma wants you all, chil'un—bofe on you,' she said to Bella and me.

"We went downstairs, supposing the 'ossifer' was gone. He was not, and our wonder increased when Mammy got us clean blue checkered aprons and put them on over



“Colonel Wychoff,” she said, “I suppose these are the children!”

our home-spun dresses, saying, 'mother wanted us in the parlor.'

"Partly frightened, and with the old Eve very much aroused, we stood while Mammy twisted Bella's curls and pulled my own thick plaits—'ole Mis' har' she called it—tighter back.

"Mother met us at the parlor door. 'Colonel Wychoff,' she said, taking us each by the hand, 'I suppose these are the children!'

"What *did* mother mean? And why did she look at us as if she didn't quite know? And, oh, horror! What did it mean when this 'Yankee,' in all his glittering uniform, came toward us with outstretched hands?

"The grand officer led us back to his chair, and kissing us each very solemnly, looked us over with careful scrutiny, as if trying to see in what way we differed from our more fortunate little sisters of the North.

"'Yes,' he said, 'these are the children.'

"The intuitions of childhood are infalli-

ble; with one good look in his kindly face we feared no more.

“We gazed in awe at the blueness of his coat and the glory of his shining epaulets and golden eagles. Alas! the uniforms we had lately seen were old and faded, and the gilt was as dimmed as the rank they now represented.

“The Colonel soon had Bella upon his knee while I stood by in amazement. Presently he brought out an orange—everything else came in with the conquering troops—and we thought that any goose might know he had a little girl. So we prefaced the affirmative by asking ‘if his little girl liked oranges?’

“‘Yes,’ he smiled, “my big girl does, and I have a big boy who likes oranges and is very, very fond of little girls.’

“‘No,’ said pert Miss Bella. ‘Not little Richmond girls he wouldn’t. Everybody ain’t like you; they call us rebel girls, and

one blue soldier mocked at Minnie Carter and called her "old secesh!"

"'Bless my life!' laughed the Colonel. 'What a very singular name; but of all little girls it is the Richmond ones that my boy loves the very best,' with a moistened look in his fine, old eyes as they traveled over to mother.

"By this time we had made such progress in our friendship that we were anxious for our whole family to be seen, which mother qualified by saying we might bring down Cecie.

"Now, Cecie was our beauty and our pride, besides being an important chronological character in herself; as she was born the night Virginia 'seceded,' and named in consequence, Secessia Virginia,—a name of which she had been inordinately proud, and delighted to repeat to father's officer friends, to their great gratification though why we did not exactly understand.

"But of all things, something of late days

had gone wrong with Cecie's name. I had overheard a neighbor say to mother: 'That child will get you all in trouble yet with her name; you would better call her "Ginnie," if any of the Yankee soldiers are around.'

"No favored cherub of any land could have been lovelier than our Cecie, with her brown eyes and golden hair; and I schooled her well as I brought her along the hall in triumph.

" 'Now, Cecie,' said I, 'remember you are named Ginnie, from Virginia, you know.'

" 'Yes,' said Cecie, 'I know.'

"Sure enough it was the first question asked. Cecie answered like a parrot:

" 'I am named Ginnie, from Virginny, you know.'

" 'But,' said the Colonel, whom mother had coached, 'you look like a little girl I have heard of, living about here, who is named "Secessia Virginia." How is that?'

Poor Cecie gave a terrified gasp and shot

through the open door like a pink and white cannon ball, screeching:

“ ‘I’m named Ginnie! I’m named Ginnie! After Vir-gi-nia, you know!’

“And we heard Mammy’s oily voice: ‘Come to Mammy, honey. What dey bin doin’ to Mammy’s lam’?’

“Mother’s hand restrained us as we made haste to follow Cecie, and Bella and I thought we knew now what all this fine visit meant; some hidden calamity, sure enough, lay in Cecie’s pretty name. But the Colonel declared that ‘really he had never heard of anything quite so good,’ and he laughed so heartily that even mother smiled and said ‘it was amusing.’

“Well, we were petted and made much of a while longer, and then mother said we might go; kissing us quietly and telling us to ‘be good children.’

“The hours sped, we heard the Colonel leave and when mother came back from the parlor she was a changed person. There was

a look of hope on her face and with it a dazed expression, as of some great good she could not quite realize. Once she caught us impulsively to her arms, and with streaming eyes murmured something about 'bread upon waters.'

"It was long afterward before she trusted herself to tell us that she knew the story of 'our prisoner.' In her heart mother felt it to be her duty to chide us, though no restrictions as to our walks had been laid upon us, one naturally supposing that fear would have kept us from venturing into danger, but recognizing the pure principles of piety and love which actuated us, and the ultimate good our kindness had wrought, she said but little at this time.

"For Colonel Wychoff was the father of 'our poor prisoner,' who had been exchanged by special order during our illness. It was in the first month of his imprisonment, before he had been able to communicate with his father and when he was ill and without

friends or money, that Bella and I had seen him, and the rigors of prison life were telling upon a constitution already weakened from exposure.

“He was doubly sick, his father said, with neglect and loneliness, when we came to his window with our childish smiles, and flowers and the few more solid gifts we could bestow. It had given him an interest in life at the time he needed it most, which was perhaps true, and he often insisted, in after days, that Mammy’s hoarhound drops were of more benefit to him than all the medicine in the Confederate pharmacopoeia. Be that as it may, they seemed to think it a debt of gratitude they owed and certainly the day of the Federal officer’s visit to us was our last day of want and terror—the last of which being no less terrible for its uncertainty—as we of Richmond knew not, at that time, what further depths of woe awaited.

“A permanent guard was placed about the house, and our empty larder was stored with

all the luxuries of life to which we had for so long been strangers. Best of all, Colonel Wychoff cheered mother with the promise to find father, if alive, and to use his influence in having him released, if a prisoner.

“Father was neither dead nor a captive. He was found in a Petersburg hospital, with one arm just amputated; and thither mother went to attend him until he could be brought home and nursed back to health.

“During these weary days no man had ever a better friend than the victor in blue proved himself to the conquered soldier in tattered grey.

“The land of the Hanover home was still our own; the walls of the well-built house standing, though what remained was but a shattered reminder of the battles fought around it.

“Colonel Wychoff interested himself personally, during father’s illness, to have the house repaired. He would frequently drive ‘we children,’ including Cecie, whom, with

stately politeness he called 'Secessia Virginia'—down the ten miles distance to 'Burleigh,' where Mammy and Uncle Bob and the black mule were already installed and at work.

"Christmas saw the family at the hospitable mansion which had assumed once more its old-time look of peace and comfort.

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" 'Did our romance end here?' some of you are asking. Not quite.

"When your Aunt Bella and I were girls of fifteen at school in Richmond, 'our prisoner' came with his lovely bride to the city, for their honeymoon. We were given a special week's holiday that we might be at home during their visit to mother.

"It was in the month of June. Never had Nature seemed fairer than the morning we drove out from Richmond along the Mechanicsville road. No traces then remained of the war's dread presence, save the

zigzag lines of breastworks, grown over with tangled vines.

“Nearing the Chickahominy, its green marshes and dank hollows were the same.

“Beyond, at ‘Burleigh,’ Labor, the King of Peace, had been crowned with a golden fruition. In the open fields, where opposing armies once stood, were sweeping ranks of Indian corn, with blue-green spear blades shining in the sun. On the rolling ground, where the artillery had been posted, and the boom of shot and shell thundered its deadly challenge, the ripening wheat swept aslant its opulent breadths, and waved in a symphony of peace. On the meadow bottoms—no longer the ambush of lurking foes—the mower swung his scythe in rhythmic strokes, and left in his wake a ridge of new-mown hay. Everywhere the air was full of sweet and homely scents and the cheerful sounds of toil.

“Lieutenant Wychoff came not as a stranger to the Virginia family whom his

father had so befriended. He was quickly a favorite with all on the farm, from father to the denizens of 'The Quarters,'—who were the old family servants now 'crappin' ' on 'shears' or working for regular wages.

He and father rode many a mile over the battlefields of Cold Harbor and Gaines' Mill, and talked 'war' until one would have thought them senior and junior officers in the same regiment.

"It was altogether a delightful visit, to be returned some years later by two full-grown young ladies very anxious to behold the grandeur of Northern cities, and to have a closer acquaintance with the once dreaded 'Yankees.'

"One of them, indeed, being so willing to heal the wounds of a divided country that she remained among them as a hostage forevermore.

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"Years have gone by. Among the younger generation the given names of Landon and

Wychoff are of frequent occurrence between these representative families of the North and South, who are one now in fealty and love of country.

“Lieutenant Wychoff, however, is traitor enough to say that he ‘would like to see again, if but for a single hour, the poorly-clad little rebel girls who came to his prison window, as the ravens came to Elijah.’ ”

TWO WAR-TIME CHRISTMAS DOLLS.

HOW THEY RAN THE BLOCKADE AND WHAT
THEY CARRIED WITH THEM.

THERE were two of us. We lay side by side in the fine glass case of a store on Lexington Street in Baltimore, when, one snowy, bustling day in early December of 1864, a pale-faced, pretty lady entered the store, and stood right in front of us.

She had on a close felt bonnet tied under her round chin, and wore a long cloth circular bordered in fur, that quite concealed her trim little figure.

"Dolls, ma'am," echoed our owner, stepping briskly forward to greet his customer. "Yes, ma'am, a fine assortment just in for the holiday trade. We've got jointed dolls, and

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musical dolls, and this," sorting some rare specimen from the rest, "is a crying doll——"

"I should think crying dolls would be in demand in poor Baltimore now," interrupted the pale, pretty lady with a faint smile.

"Well, not more than usual, ma'am. It's wonderful how folks do keep up Christmas for all the battles and mourning. Children are children just the same, in war-time, I s'pose."

"Please let me see those dolls in the case," asked the lady with some air of impatience.

"Ah, these?" he said, lifting us out by each an arm,—“these are beauties. Nothing to break here—heads firm,” giving mine an easy twist, for fear it might come off; “natural hair,” smoothing back my pale pompadour, “and no inside works to get out of order. Good, sensible dolls.”

The little mother—I knew she was a mother the moment she held my companion—examined us carefully. She took us, one

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at a time, to the door, turned us about, and pinched—actually pinched our skins.

It really quite piqued my vanity that she seemed more particular about our limbs and how we were made, and our knee and arm joints than our pretty tinted faces, bright eyes, and the fine texture of our flowing hair.

“Yes,” she decided at length. “I think these will answer. I will take the pair.”

“And you are right. They’re a handsome couple; pity to part ’em,” mumbled the merchant, the end of twine between his teeth as he rolled us, separately, first in tissue paper and then in brown. “Where shall I send them, ma’am?”

“I’ll take them with me,” answered the lady.

She paid her bill, and we went each into a deep, deep pocket that almost filled the either side of her long circular.

Then she drew down her thick veil and left the store.

Up and down the streets—in and out of

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the stores, went the veiled lady, while new parcels accumulated in the great pockets of her long cloak.

And came lastly to a place the very whiff of which penetrating my wrappings, smelled of drugs.

But she passed straight on through to a room that felt cozy and warm.

Bless you! She was well known there!

Such talking—whispered, and quick—and smothered little laughs it seemed about something quite unusual. At last turning to go, the lady begged:

“Now, don’t trust it with any one else.”

“No, no,” was the hasty assurance. “I will bring it myself—this evening. But is it safe?—Do you not fear to——”

“Fear!” with a rising scorn. “There is no such word as fear,” she said.

“And when do you leave?” the other asked.

“To-night. They only gave me two days.”

The veiled lady’s next stopping place was evidently her home, for the door opened as

she approached, and a sweet old voice greeted her.

“Oh, child, I’ve been so uneasy!”

“Sh! mother dear. Help me upstairs.”

“Is it all right, Phyllis?” questioned her mother anxiously, when they reached an upper room.

“Yes—yes, all right, mama; but I have had such a time!”

“And are wet through?”

“Oh, no, only outside—and see! Here are my treasures,” she said, unwinding us tenderly as the old lady helped her rifle the big cloak pockets.

“Why, they are nice!” exclaimed the elder, bruising my poor leg, “and strong enough to——”

“Mind, mother! The very walls in Baltimore have ears,” cautioned the daughter, as she laid us on the bed.

“No one will hear us, Phyllis; we are alone for this afternoon,—but come,” the

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mother urged, "you are cold and tired. I have kept your hot tea waiting."

With something of anxiety in their glance around the handsome bedroom, they locked the door and went downstairs.

The room we were in was much disordered.

Heaps of clothing, dry-goods, packages of all kinds littered the chairs.

In one corner a large trunk stood open. It appeared that some one was going on a journey. The little mother, so weary-looking, but with such brave, brown eyes, seemed scarcely strong enough for a long trip; but it soon became clear she was secretly preparing for one of a hazardous nature.

When they returned mother and daughter locked themselves in. and went to work in a strange way.

They tore rich dress goods into skirt lengths; they cut linen and cambric and flannel by huge patterns and basted them roughly; all manner of garments they began

and left unfinished—the old lady grumbling at the wasted labor.

“But you see, mother,” said Phyllis, her little gold thimble cleaving the air, “the goods cannot be taken whole. They would be stopped as contraband; and they will make over nicely; we are so much in need.”

The mother sewed on and lamented.

“Oh, this dreadful war, Phyllis! If John would only——”

“If John thinks he’s right, mother,” broke in Phyllis firmly, “my place is with him. And Lily and Willie, except for plainer fare, are as well there as here. You never saw babies grow faster than mine.”

She finished this bravely, blinking back the tears as she spoke.

“But to part again, my child—after all these years—and so soon.”

“Others have not even our comfort, dear mother; John said if the Provost knew—I wouldn’t be here a day.”

A bell rang. Phyllis hastened to answer

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it, and brought back a bulky parcel, which, to my surprise, she put between the mattresses.

"Well," she said, with a sigh of relief, as she replaced the bed, "that at least is safe. We won't fix the dolls until to-night," giving me a loving little pat in passing. Of course that meant beautiful dressing and I was truly glad that something promised to be natural.

They worked steadily on. The trunk began to fill; the young mother seemed more and more given over to destructiveness.

Lustrous ribbons, creamy laces, filmy handkerchiefs, all the elegant trifles of tasteful dress, she crumpled and made to look worn, while she placed them promiscuously in the trunk.

"And, oh, mama!" she cried, flitting about like a bird, "think what a blessing it will be if I can only get through with the dolls!"

"Phyllis, I tremble at the thought. *There* will be your danger."

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“Not danger, perhaps, mama mine; though it may be confiscation”—this with a very wry face—“and the loss of all my new wardrobe.”

That night the old lady came up alone.

Below stairs there was laughter and music and the hum of gay voices.

It was late when Phyllis appeared.

“We will have to work now for lost time,” she began in her cheery way. “Have you the glue ready, mother?”

“Yes—simmering nicely,” was the reply.

“Then you will come here, my Willie’s doll,” said the little mother, “and we will see if a doll cannot be useful as well as beautiful,” lifting my companion as she spoke and reaching between the beds for the bulky package.

Both she placed upon a table beside the old lady.

Then she undid the big parcel. And what do you think it contained?

A great mass of soft fluffy stuff, lighter

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than flour, and whiter than snow—if it could be!

I had seen many a doll in my master's store dressed for the Christmas holidays, but I had never seen anything like this.

When I saw Phyllis take up a long, slim knife and run it deep under poor Willie's neck, if I had been a crying doll, I should surely have screamed!

As it was, I lay quite still and watched.

The slim knife worked in and out, carefully breaking something a-loose, and then the little mother's hands—that seemed too tender to hurt a fly—lifted the doll's head clean off, and set it on the table.

A pair of gleaming scissors ripped open the cords across the headless body and then—snip—clip—the arms and the legs were severed and fell apart.

Then they spread a paper and the old lady emptied each limb as the daughter handed it over until there was nothing left of the

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poor doll but a bit of flabby skin, with neither bone nor muscle in it.

All this while they talked volubly like a pair of conspirators—as they were.

“My child,” warned the mother, “you must be very careful. The blockade runners are so closely watched.”

“Yes, I know. But you see, mother, the Federals pass me to Point of Rocks.”

“Ah, but afterward——”

“I must trust to luck. I may be searched,” said Phyllis ruefully, “my baggage will be, of course. I have heard no trunk escapes that lynx-eyed lieutenant.”

“Lieutenant!” echoed the mother. “Why, I thought the blockade spy was a woman.”

“Oh, so she is—or he is,” laughed Phyllis; “anyhow, they say it wears the Federal uniform of a lieutenant.”

“The brazen piece! Trolling ’round the country in men’s clothes,” cried the old lady indignantly. “But, oh, my love, if she finds

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you out! Women are so keen to suspect another."

"I'll try and guard against dilemmas, mama. The very virtue of what I carry will be a talisman."

"And take no letters, Phyllis. Not even to——"

"Nor pen, nor pencil mark, nor one traitorous word," answered Phyllis. "This is different," as she scooped up the white powder. "I don't feel I'm doing wrong, for every grain here may be worth a human life."

And she poured another spoonful in the doll's leg which her mother held suspended.

For all this time they had been filling the white powder in the doll's body, and ramming it in tightly until never a baby grew plump so fast.

Then back and forth their shining needles flew until the disjointed limbs were together.

Even the head had not escaped and Willie's glossy black curls swept the table as the last morsel of powder went tightly in.

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"A piece of paper, mama," then called Phyllis, "to paste over the neck while I get the glue."

Presently she held up the resurrected doll in triumph, and asked:

"Except that it is heavier, mother, who would know?"

"No one, I think, dear. Get the other."

As Phyllis raised me from the bed, my eyes turned toward the table. I saw the old woman take up the slim knife, and peer over her glasses at me as she felt along its keen edge, and I fainted away with terror.

After that my head was never quite right. I could not hear so well. There were buzzing sounds inside and sharp little concussions like the snaps of toy torpedoes.

Next morning when I was beautifully dressed in a spangled tarlton skirt and crimson satin bodice, I felt better, and was quite revived when my astonished gaze fell upon Willie, who was in full regimentals of blue, with golden epaulets and stars, just as I

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had seen them many a time in the café at the store.

Late in the afternoon Phyllis and her mother came in the room together.

We were wrapped in a new shawl—from which a bit of fringe was torn away—and I could just hear the little mother's chirping voice:

"Prison, indeed, mama! Have no fears. They are too anxious to be rid of John's wife for that! And to think that *I* should take the first Yankee officer into Richmond!" she added.

The poor old mother was not so easily consoled.

She folded her arms closely around Phyllis, and as they knelt together beside the bed, I could hear her low tones broken with sobs. She prayed for their loved ones and for themselves and for peace.

"Oh, the peace," she wept, "that seems so far from this distracted nation!"

After that there was a hubbub of voices in

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farewell; the trunk shut down with a spring and I knew no more.

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In the bare barracks of the Point of Rocks army post I next saw the light. Phyllis stood by her open trunk, and a company of blue-coated, yellow-braided soldiers, with high cavalry boots and clanking sabres loitered near with some curiosity.

A young lieutenant with a smooth face and ringlets of red hair, whose duty it was to examine ladies' baggage, stooped over and lifted us from the trunk tray.

"Umph—dolls!" he said in a high falsetto, as we were unwrapped.

There was a roar of laughter.

"Dolls!" exclaimed a sergeant, taking us from the lieutenant. He lifted one in each hand so the men might see.

"Boys, ye ain't been seein' nothing of this sort lately. Gosh! they do take my eye!"

The men crowded around.

"I've got three babies at home myself,

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ma'am," said the old sergeant, apologetically to Phyllis, but the red-head lieutenant grunted as I was turned topsy-turvy and handed around.

I was soon passed back to Phyllis—apparently the soldiers were afraid of my feminine finery. But Willie they hailed with shouts.

"Say! here's a new way to conquer the Rebs!" cried one.

"The Trojan horse come again, by Jove!"

"Capturin' our officers!" roared another.

"Pass 'em on, Lieutenant!" shouted a third. With boyish impulses they tossed the small stuffed officer from one to another, while Phyllis stared for five seconds in horrified expectation that the white, fluffy stuffing would break out at some seam. Then her voice rang out clearly:

"Don't—oh, don't break them, gentlemen—don't. They are for my children!"

The little mother's small hands were clasped, the tears glistening in her brave

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brown eyes. She looked lovely enough to melt the heart of a rock as she pleaded for us.

It was time; for the last leap had landed Willie clear across the room, and was certainly a good catch.

But when Phyllis spoke every cap was doffed, and Willie was handed to her with a bow.

The men lingered, laughing, but after awhile they went out leaving us alone with the smooth-faced fellow, who continued to dive down into the trunk until it was empty.

"Umph!" he grunted again, "very ingenious arrangement," shaking out a bundle of unfinished silk skirts, and peeping at himself in an ivory-backed hand mirror that lay beneath them.

"Are these things for your own personal use?" he questioned, opening a box of kid gloves, every pair of which I had seen Phyllis try on.

"Solely for my own use and personal

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adornment," replied the saucy little mother, confidently.

He fumbled a while longer among the tossed-up clothing, doused half a bottle of cologne on his handkerchief, and told Phyllis she could re-pack; and leaning cross-legged against the mantel he puffed away at a cigar and waited as she deftly re-filled the trunk.

But when she reached for us he stepped forward. Oh, but my heart stood still!

Though the brave little woman—not a feature changed, as that spy lieutenant took us from her and felt all over my satin waist, and peeped up Willie's long blue trousers.

"Umph," he grunted at last: "no letters—no papers—nothing contraband."

Then his spurs jingled, his sword rattled, and the smoke from his cigar blew around his red curls in a fog, as he left the room.

When Phyllis placed us in the trunk tray, she bowed her head and whispered something so softly that it was never heard on earth.

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Then she motioned to a servant who had been waiting. He took the trunk on his shoulder and set off, followed by Phyllis, toward a hut I had seen on the outskirts of the military camp.

The debatable land—the district occupied by neither army, but scouted over by both—and about which I had heard Phyllis and her mother speak of with such terror, was now before her—and great was her fear of discovery.

Troops moving on raid or reconnaissances, she had been told, were quick to independent action, and the little mother knew that if any band stopped her they might again examine her baggage—with keener judgment than the soi-disant lieutenant, chiefly occupied with her feminine finery, had shown.

So she determined on a midnight flitting.

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The flare of a tallow candle shone about me when next the trunk was opened.

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"Yes, I will soon be ready," I heard Phyllis say.

I could have sworn to the birdlike tones of her voice anywhere, but I doubted my own eyes when they fell upon her face, which was as black as burnt cork could make it. Not even a trace remained of the dainty whiteness of her hands.

Near by stood an old colored woman, who slipped a coarse, plaid garment, like her own, over Phyllis' trim figure, and hid her brown hair beneath a rainbow bandana.

"How do I look now, auntie?" she asked, folding a big striped shawl over her shoulders.

"Jes' spry, honey, 'ceptin' dem lill feet! Heah—you take dese, an' I'll go bar' foot."

"But, auntie—the cold. I don't like——"

"Nebber mind what you likes. I knows bes'. De Yankee cabalry mought ketch us and ef dey see you lill boots, dey'll 'spect de troof. Come, we's got to step peart. You's

my gal Mandy, gwine home; 'member dat, honey."

"And can we carry these?" asked Phillis, holding us out toward the woman. "If my trunk is lost I'd like to save the dolls."

"Well—ain' dey purty! Yes'm, kyar 'em easy. But de trunk—Lawd! Dey nebber ketch Jeff."

"Sarvant, Missis," said Jeff himself, as an old man came in—the light flickering on his ebony face and grizzled hair. "Is yer ready? Time yer all wuz gone," he advised. "Hit'll be broad daylight presen'—'fore yer kin parse de——"

Here we were thrust into a bundle and borne on the top of the black woman's head, and her bare feet stepped quickly out into the darkness. Phyllis thumped briskly along in the big shoes behind her.

The walking continued a long while and in silence; when toward them on the hard road came the clattering of hoofs and the

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sharp ejaculation, "Halt!" rang out just above me.

There was a short parley, for the old woman did the talking.

"Now come on, gal," she cried, finally. "You gwine poke 'long here all day?" She clutched the bundle tightly and went on so fast that Phyllis could scarcely keep the pace.

When they rested we were in the dusk of a piny wood and the old woman lifted her bundle down. Low rumblings shook the earth, and rattling and bumping sounds were tearing by like the drag of heavy wagons.

I heard distant reports—and crackling gunshots—and music! Oh, I knew the music! "Yankee Doodle" and the "Star Spangled Banner" and "The Girl I Left Behind Me!"

Often and often I had heard those tunes from the drums and cornets of the band in Baltimore when the marching regiments passed the store!



The sharp ejaculation, "Halt!" rang out.

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After so long these notes died away, and little shots then came fainter and far between.

Hours elapsed before we dared to move on.

When we stopped again it was within the smoky walls of a log cabin. There Phyllis sank upon the bed a pitiable sight. Great rolling tears washed the dye from her face in streaks, and the daubs of white and black were like the piebald complexion of a toy cat. Auntie pulled away the turban, and held a glass to the little mother's lips.

"Drink dis, honey," she said, "and go to sleep. We's had a tight pull, but we's got fro, an' dere ain' nuffin' 'tall gwine hurt you now. We's safe."

"Oh, am I safe at last? At last?" murmured poor Phyllis.

"You is dat, honey. 'Way down Souf in Dixie!"

Phyllis slept the deep sleep of complete exhaustion all day.

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There was a blaze in the wide open fireplace and the aroma of coffee filled the room.

The mild winter sunlight slanted in long beams across the rough boards and was going down, when a horse whinnied outside.

Auntie hastened to the door.

"Bless Gawd! You's come at las'. I 'clar' dis time, Jeff, I *was* skeered. In de name o' hebben, what's been gwine on?"

"I dunno. Hed a scrimmage wid some gorillas, or suthin'—b'leeve in my soul I'se dodged de whole army wid Marse Linkum at de haid."

A cart backed to the open entrance, and from under a heaping load of hay Jeff brought in the trunk.

"An' de lady," he asked, "how'd she stan' it?"

"Like to a-drapped," said Auntie, "when de fus soldier tol' us to git outen de road; de rigiment was behint. Ef I hedn't ketched her han' an' run fer de woods we mought o' bin kilt."

"Or diskivered," said Jeff.

Auntie crept to the bed and leaned over.

Phyllis, awakening, caught her two hands and pressed them between her own.

"Oh, you good soul!" she said, "I shall never, never forget you!"

"Den git up, chile, ef you's rested. Every t'ing's ready fer yer baf—an' dar's yer trunk."

That roused her. She was the intrepid little mother once more, despite her grimy face; which her warm bath soon rendered as fair and beautiful as ever.

We traveled smoothly after this with a rolling motion that carried us swiftly onward.

I knew, at length, when the puffing engine stopped, and the trunk was wheeled over the cobble-paved streets of a city; and I felt when we were lifted from a carriage and carried up innumerable steps into the stillest and gloomiest building I was ever in.

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Everything here was silent, and sad, and solemn.

Here they placed us upon a long table at which many women worked, scraping cloth into piles of lint, and filling paper boxes with little balls that were not bon-bons.

Groups of men in uniforms of grey—as sober looking as themselves—gathered about us in grave curiosity.

One of these, a tall, stately man whom they called “General,” stood sternly by and gave explicit directions to a matron as she unlooped my ribbon sash and stripped away my satin bodice and spangled skirt.

Paralyzed with fear, there came a blank in my existence—for how long I know not.

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Coming back to life my dreamy fancies took delightful forms.

I was a happy doll once more! I floated in candy grottoes; wingèd cupids swung around me, and Roman candles and sky-rockets fell in dazzling showers at my feet.



A tall, stately man, whom they called "General," stood sternly by.

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Half-awake I watched them dress Willie again in the gay, blue regimentals of a Federal officer.

On the long table there was a great mass of soft, fluffy white powder, so like *the other* that I shuddered at the memory.

The matron gathered the white powder upon two broad plates and the stern surgeon-general smiled and smiled again as the piles of powder grew higher and higher. Then with extreme care he poured it all into a big glass jar labeled, "Quinine!"

Before we left the gloomy hospital we were again as plump and healthy as before our tragic journey.

In the evening we were carried home.

Home, with the stately surgeon-general; where the little mother met us at the door and the great doctor—all his sternness vanished in smiles of love—folded her in his arms, with the tips of her dark curls just touching the golden stars of his coat collar.

For this was "John!"

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Such a happy home-coming as it was! And such a happy Christmas Eve as we had, even in beleaguered Richmond!

And oh, the delight with which Lily and Willie—for whom we had been named—danced into their parents' room the next morning, to show the magnificent Yankee dolls that Santa Claus sent them through the underground railway.

THE KING'S WHIRR.

NOW, mother, I promised Willie Rives and the other boys to go with them to Blakey's pond this afternoon; they're going to have a glorious time fishing, and I haven't tried the new line father brought me from Charlottesville yet. I can't now—I just can't."

And Harry Lewis dashed down his straw hat on the kitchen dresser with a force that spoke all of his impatience.

"My son! my son!" cried Mrs. Lewis, a soft-voiced woman, whose tones often stole into Harry's heart and checked its wild, hot impulses.

"But, mother," he said, a little contritely, "I can't *this* time. I can't give up all my

pleasure just to carry Granny Beaver down to the mill-road," and there were tears of real vexation in his eyes as he grumbled: "I'm sure if ever I live to be eighty I hope I'll know enough to stay at home, instead of plaguing folks to carry me off to gossip with another old crony!"

Harry was in a great heat of temper, for his inclinations and his conscience were having a sharp battle. His mother knew that it would be no slight sacrifice for him to resign his half-day holiday in the woods and the fishing with his classmates for a ride with an infirm old woman.

But Mrs. Lewis was a judicious mother, and she would not command obedience; there would be no merit in that. She just laid down the pretty linen shirt bosom she was hemstitching, and looking at him with her calm, earnest gaze, said:

"Well, my boy, I shall not urge you further; I only want you to remember that the time may come when you too may be a poor

and lonely old creature, without a joy or a hope, perhaps, and you won't be sorry then that in your strong, happy boyhood you put aside your own pleasure to do a good deed;" and Mrs. Lewis resumed her sewing.

Harry did not answer. He rapped the table sharply with his knuckles, knit his open brow into double crisscross lines and sauntered out to the garden.

Mrs. Lewis knew the struggle that was going on, deep and hard, in her boy's soul, and she whispered a prayer that he might be led to obey its better voice.

There was no half-heartedness in Harry Lewis. If he made up his mind to do an unpleasant thing there was never any delay or sullen hesitation about it. It was, perhaps, half an hour when he returned to the house. He came quickly up to his mother, and spoke in a rapid way, as if afraid to trust himself.

"Well, mother, it seems like something always happens when I want to—but—but

—anyway, I've been over to tell Granny we'd start off at once. I want to be gone, you know, before the boys get here. They'll make game of me, and I'll get mad and——”

“And you are my own brave boy!” smiled his mother, her eyes dim with thick tears as she bent down and kissed him.

“There, Granny Beaver! All right now?” asked the boy, raising his tones that the old woman, who was quite deaf, could hear him.

“Yes, Harry,” answered the broken voice. “Bless your heart for your care of a helpless old woman!”

Harry sprang lightly into the wagon and they rolled away from the door of the little red cottage, on whose blackened roof had stormed the changes of a century.

“What a beautiful day it is!” quavered the old woman, peering with her dim eyes about her. “I declare it puts new life into my old bones to git out, and makes me feel a'most as peart as if I was a gal agin!”

“I expect times have altered considerably,

since then, haven't they, Granny?" suggested Harry, whose heart somehow began to warm toward the old woman, as one's heart is apt to do for those to whom we act kindly.

"Yes, child; what with the new-fangled notions and the new ways o' travelin', and 'specially o' preachin' and livin', folks have got a long way from the good old-fashioned days."

Harry was too wise to venture an argument on the comparative merits of the past and present, so he flicked the horse gently with the whip and looked around on the day that had blossomed out of the heart of May.

It *was* wondrous with beauty. All its pulses seemed beating to a jubilee of praise; soft winds stirred the fluted branches in the woods, and the robins trilled down sweet notes of music; the mountains wore a hazy mist of blue in the distance, and the skies,

as blue above, were draped with white clouds like folds of crumpled lawn.

It was altogether lovely, that afternoon, and it stirred up many memories of her lost youth in the heart of Grandmother Beaver.

Harry grew interested as she talked of the olden days and their happenings, which she remembered better than she did the things of last year or last week. She told him of the war that came when she was a child, and of how, one May day whose still beauty was like this, a rumor came down from the little village of Charlottesville, that the "Britishers" were coming—two or three people who lived in the outskirts had caught a gleam of their crimson uniforms on the turnpike.

"All the strong, brave men had gone to the war," said Granny, "and there was none left to defend the helpless women; so the mothers caught up their little children and rushed out to the woods. They left everything just as it was," said she, "doors and



Heard the shoutin' and scrouched behind the big willow.

windows wide open, and took nothing but what they had on, in their mortal terror o' them red-coats.

"They was dreadful havoc done in some of the homes that mornin'," continued Granny reminiscently, "where the women had left their weavin' and churnin' and spinnin'. My sister Louisy had a web o' forty yards o' the finest linen in the loom and some drunken soldier slashed it all over with his sword; and barrels o' cider and home-made wine, they tapped and left to run loose—all they didn't drink! I was a leetle gal and I was down to the spring when they come, but I heard the shoutin' and I scrouched behind the big willow. When they was a-tearin' 'round inside o' Granther's house, an' drinkin', I run up the hill to the woods like mad, and got away."

Granny Beaver drew off her knitted cotton mitten and showed Harry the shrivelled finger of her left hand, which had grown in a sharp angle at the lower joint.

"I fell over a log with my hand under me, a-runnin' so fast, and broke that little finger. It never grewed straight agin and I've had that to remember 'em by ever sense; nigh on to seventy-odd years," chirped Grandmother Beaver.

As Harry listened to these things he forgot "the boys," who, probably by this time were running out their lines in the pond, and the blood kindled in his cheeks as he wished he had been there; a brave, strong man with a score or two of other good fellows to do good battle for those helpless women and tender children.

And Harry was greatly surprised when the old mill loomed up before him, for it did not seem possible that he had driven four miles.

Just beyond the mill there was a double rock-house, and here lived Aunt Betsy Moon, a paralytic old woman and the only surviving friend of Grandmother Beaver's youth.

Harry witnessed the meeting between the two aged women with real interest, but when they settled into a talk of old times, of Hiram and Jareds, who had married Paulines and Elviras, and of Joshuas and Abners, who were second cousins to Mary Jane and Jacintha somebody, poor little Harry grew restless (not to say uneasy), for once started he did not know when Granny would get through.

Aunt Betsy gave him a little basket of early wax cherries and some cookies, and told him to run away out of doors and amuse himself.

Harry wandered about the yard awhile and then down the road by a way which led to the old mill. Here there were horses tied about, with bags of grist for the mill, and a wagon loading up with barrels of flour at the door.

The stout miller, all covered with white dust, helped the driver to load.

When they were through he turned, and

noticing Harry asked him if he "would like to go inside and see the mill?"

Harry was glad enough to do this, for his thoughts by that time were with the boys, whom his fancy saw hauling in, with shouts of triumph, their prizes of trout and silver perch, and here he was. Oh, it was very, very hard that he should be deprived of all this sport just to please two old women!

But suddenly he remembered Grandmother Beaver's enjoyment of her ride and tried to repel this selfish regret.

He stood outside awhile and watched the fore-bay and the large old-fashioned overshoot wheel going round—and—round, then, looking up above the mill door as they went inside, he saw some large letters which might once have been painted black, but were now so faded and washed out by many rains that Harry could not make them out.

"What do those letters spell?" he asked.

"It was 'King's Whirr,' my boy, when that sign was first painted," replied the miller.

"But what do they mean?" Harry questioned.

"Just the name of the mill," he was told. "The site of this mill is very, very old, and in years gone by it paid tribute to the King. The people paid toll to the mill and the mill paid toll to King George—at least, that is what the country people say."

So Harry had learned one more interesting thing of which he had never heard, and besides that, he spent such a delightful afternoon going through the tall old building hung with cobwebs and dusted with fine meal and flour, that he forgot how the hours were flying.

The sun was sinking low when the boy remembered that Granny Beaver might be growing impatient, and he hurried back to the rock cottage.

Granny had hobbled to the front door with her staff and was anxiously peering up and down the road.

"I'll get the rheumatiz in my shoulder

agin if I'm out arter dewfall," she said to Harry when he backed around with the wagon.

"Well, we'll have you in and home in an hour; my horse is a fast one, you know. Had a good time, Granny Beaver?"

"Yes, child, it's raly seemed as if I was home agin, talkin' 'bout old times," and there was a faint sparkle in the dim eyes of old Mrs. Beaver.

As Harry assisted her into the carryall, he heard Aunt Betsy begging Granny to "come agin soon; we hain't got much longer here now, Peggy," she said, leaning forward to catch a final glimpse of them as they drove up the road.

"Well, my son, what kind of an afternoon have you had?" inquired Mrs. Lewis, as he bounded into the house, where she was cutting the cake for supper.

"Oh, capital, capital, mother!" and Harry's face, radiant with pleasure, emphasized his words.

“And you are not sorry you gave up the fishing?”

“Not a bit! The fishing will keep and poor Granny won’t—much longer, I mean, and I’ll take her down to the mill any time she wishes to go.”

And he came and stood at his mother’s side and tried to tell her of all he had seen and of what he had learned, and of how Granny had enjoyed the afternoon, and Mrs. Lewis said:

“I will go with you some time, my dear boy, and we’ll make up a little party once in awhile, so that Granny can enjoy the bright summer days while they last.”

A MOUNTAIN BLOSSOM

IN that beautiful part of Piedmont, Virginia, just east of the Blue Ridge, where the range of mountains holds the valley in like a scalloped circle about a picture, there was a small frame house that looked cosily out from an orchard of apple trees. Rows of lilacs led from the white gate to the latticed porch and stands of beehives were under the peach trees by the fence.

Back of the house was a trim garden, where early strawberries peeped from bunchy green leaves and currant and gooseberry bushes bordered the walks.

It was a homelike spot. Small and poor and plain, if one weighed its value by the

rocky soil cleared around it, or judged its worth to others than those who called it "home."

Like the fairy castle in the Black Forest—hidden from all the great world without—this little cottage held one jewel purer and more precious than the big Kohinoor in the Queen's crown.

This was Maybell—a little girl whose papa tilled the rocky fields, and whose mama made strawberry tarts and currant jam for Maybell's dainty self.

And Maybell—Oh, she flitted about like a bird! And was brighter and sweeter than the roses were that month—five years ago—when the angels brought her there.

Her mother named her Maybell.

"For her eyes are as blue as the blue-bells in May," she said, "and they are as blue as the skies!"

But her father called her "Ladybell," and sometimes "Bonribell," and often when she trudged over the plowed fields or down

to the hay meadow with his warm dinner in a pail and Carlo trotting by her side, papa called her "dinner-bell."

All names that were lovable was Maybell to her parents.

She was a cute child; full of fun and frolic as a fairy, but thoughtful, too, in a baby way, with quaint little ideas of planning and doing things to suit herself that surprised her mama and delighted her papa.

Mrs. Lane was a thrifty housewife and she was already training this little daughter to be tidy and useful, and Maybell was a busy body for such a midget. She liked nothing better than to "ep" wash the dishes, perched in the high chair papa had made her, or to "shoo" the hens from mama's flower-bed. She could even hovel the fuzzy little chicks when the rain-clouds burst on Humpback, miles above her, and yet came down the valley so fast that Maybell's short legs had often to run a race for shelter for themselves.

She was very fond of her mama. She even tried to take care of her in her small way and helped her in many things.

No one else lived on the small place, and they were too poor to keep help. The nearest farmhouse was miles away; yet no king's palace was a happier home than the isolated cot with Maybell for its sunshine.

This spring, for the first time, trouble touched the tiny dove-cote. Mrs. Lane was sick and as the summer lengthened, she grew feebler.

From constant use, Maybell knew where everything in the tidy household was kept, and under her mother's directions, her deft little hands performed many of the smaller tasks.

"Mama is so seepy!" she would say when she saw her mother lie down so often, and when her own little feet lagged with the many steps, she nestled close beside on the trundle-bed, a picture of rosy childhood.

Mr. Lane's work could not stop, but he

left later each day for the fields and came back earlier in his anxiety.

One morning, however, Mrs. Lane seemed slightly better, and Mr. Lane, coming in with the foamy milk pail, said:

"Mary, the wood is out. Foster's men are peeling bark to-day and I would better go up in the forest, I think, and bring down a load, if you can get on without me."

"Yes," said Mrs. Lane, with a loving glance at Maybell, who was feeding Snowlocks. "I think we can manage—my little housekeeper and I."

Maybell—not too busy with kitty's breakfast to hear—danced into the pantry, her eyes sparkling.

"An' may I wide, papa?" she begged. "Oh, may I wide with you, jes' a little piece?"

"What does mama say, Ladybell?"

"Let her ride to the creek, John," Mrs. Lane consented, "and leave the small bucket at the spring as you pass. You can bring

mama some cool water when you return," she said to Maybell, tucking the flossy curls under her sunbonnet with a loving kiss.

Mr. Lane drove around from the stable, threw in his axe, swung Maybell up in the blue wagon, and pulled through the big gate with Carlo frisking after them.

How happy Maybell was, holding on to the reins with one fat hand.

And "Oh, how lovely!" was her thought as they came out from the grove, and down the red lane to the creek that sparkled in the sunlight like a mirror when the horses stopped to drink. There was another little girl with blue eyes and long yellow curls laughing up in her face when she leaned over.

"Lis'en, papa," she cried. "How Ballie 'soops' the water froo his nose."

Mr. Lane waited. When the horses had "sooped" all the water they wanted, he put Maybell on the plank bridge, watched her

pick her way carefully to the end and run off up the lane with Carlo.

Then he cracked his long whip and rattled on to the woods a couple of miles away.

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A bark-peeler's camp is a bustling place. The steady strokes of the axes and the crashing, crunching sound of falling trees, mingle with the jolly woodman's song and shout and laughter.

High up on the mountain side that morning, in the lull of these mirthful noises, one of the men, leaning on the helve of his axe, listened.

"Jim," he said to his partner, "they's a curus noise down thar a bit. I dunno ef it's a panter er a child. Hear thet now! Git yer gun an' come along."

The cries stopped—then rose again as the men drew nearer. Suddenly a big, brown dog, scenting the ground, bounded out from the bushes.

The men hurried on, and saw a little child—a tiny figure in a torn pink dress, her face and hands sun-blistered and scratched—and her blue eyes drenched in tears.

“My papa!” she cried, shrinking from the rough, red-shirted men. “I wants my papa! I tum to fin’ my papa!”

“Lan’ o’ Cain!” said Jim. “An’ I thought ’twas a varmint! Whar’d you come from, sis, an’ who’s yer pap?”

But she wailed in terror, as other wood-choppers, with gleaming axes, gathered around her.

No one knew the child—she seemed to have dropped from the skies, until one of the men looking after the dog, reflected:

“I b’lieve that’s Lane’s dog. Isn’t he in the woods to-day?”

“Yes, he is,” said Jim. “An’ I bet this young un’s his’n. Come erlong, honey, we’ll fin’ yer pap.”

Maybell clung frantically to his brawny neck. Carlo had run ahead, whining and

looking back, until he broke into a lope and was lost to sight. But they heard his glad bark farther up the Ridge, and presently met Lane coming down with rapid strides.

The father's heart gave a great throb as Maybell sprang to his arms.

"Mama is seep," she wailed. "Oh, papa, papa! tum home an' wake my mama!"

The child's exhausted condition, for the moment, stifled Lane's greater fears.

"Some water—quick!" he called, motioning the men back. He bathed the flushed face and put the cool water to Maybell's quivering lips. Soon she was quieter, but she only reiterated between broken breaths that her mother was asleep and "wouldn't take Maybell."

"For the love of life!" cried Lane, "some one take my horse and hasten with the doctor back to my house! And one of you," he begged, "go through the Hollow to the Widow Miles, and get her to come on at once."

Clasping Maybell tightly, he was down the mountain in a gallop.

He groaned as he drew near his home. The peaceful quiet of noonday seemed the stillness of death. The smell of the clover and the new hay, and all the indefinable scents that linger about a country house yard, oppressed him with their faint sweetness.

The open gate and doorway were just as Maybell had left them and Snowlocks sunned herself on the mat.

As he stepped upon the porch, the Widow Miles, hastening across the fields, rode around from the barn lot.

They entered the house together. Mrs. Lane was lying limp and apparently lifeless close by the open fireplace. There had been a fire left from getting breakfast, as Lane remembered. One end of Mrs. Lane's calico wrapper was burned in a great hole—the dress and the embers of the kitchen fire still

wet from Maybell's empty water pail, which was on the hearth nearby.

The same baby hands that had saved her life had brought a pillow and lifted her mother's head upon it.

Lane raised his wife; other neighbors coming in, they carried her to the little bedroom and were vainly using every known restorative, when the doctor arrived.

Maybell had refused to be comforted or to leave her mother. The child, knowing nothing of death, seemed yet beside herself with terror at this strange lethargy so like it.

Granny Miles coaxed her away. "Come now," she said, "you will worry the good doctor. Come and let Granny comb your purty hair for mama to see."

Half an hour's work of the doctor's skill brought a heaving, gasping sigh, and slowly Mrs. Lane awoke to consciousness. Her eyes unclosed—and her lips spoke faintly: "Maybell—my baby!"

Her father brought her in—the light of a great joy in his eyes as he knelt and thanked God that He had given both of his treasures back to him.

Mrs. Lane's sister arrived next day, and a month later Mrs. Lane, slowly convalescent, was sitting on the latticed porch. The soft winds of Indian summer fanned her thin cheeks, and her grateful eyes followed Maybell.

Maybell—unconscious that she was a neighborhood heroine—perched high up in the blue wagon; her golden curls flying and her cheeks as plump and rosy as the round, red apples they were bringing in from the autumn harvest.

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